

# Iowa DNR News

For immediate release

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## **EARLY MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASON OPENS OCTOBER 11**

The early muzzleloader season opens Oct. 11, and is Iowa's earliest of four firearms either-sex deer seasons. This sold out nine-day season is limited to 7,500 resident licenses that are sold on a first-come first-serve basis (the quota does not include resident landowner/tenant licenses).

This autumn's weather has been more seasonal than last year and temperatures are predicted to be normal or slightly above normal throughout the state on the Saturday opener. At this time of year, with their winter coats growing in, the deer become increasingly sensitive to temperatures that are above normal. In many areas, biting insects are starting to decline but there are still enough out there to make their presence known.

By mid-October, bachelor groups of bucks are breaking up with mature buck associations disbanding first. This is the time when older bucks can seemingly disappear for the few weeks preceding the rut. Plentiful food supplies, moderate temperatures, and experience with the upcoming rut instinctively cause deer to become more inactive and to build bodily reserves.

Stand sites that take advantage of food resources such as acorns and clover/alfalfa, or that cover trails to nearby bedding areas will serve the hunter best during this season. Deer can also be found utilizing corn at this time of year both for food and cover. The amount of feeding in cornfields during October is often dependent on how good the local acorn crop is, especially acorns from the white oak group which are available for only a few weeks in the fall and are highly sought after by deer. With green forage still available, deer will also actively seek this out the feeding in soybean fields during the season will be dependent on how green they still are with use declining after the leaves begin turning yellow. Some green bean fields can still be found in portions of the state because of the late plantings due to spring rains and summer floods.

Hunters using tree stands are reminded to inspect their equipment and make sure it is in good working order and to remember that a safety harness should always be used with tree or ladder stands.

Survey data indicates that, in general, hunters will find deer populations similar to 2007 in northwest, north central and portions of central Iowa, while densities in eastern and southern Iowa have declined some from 2007. However, deer populations are strong in eastern and southern Iowa with densities still above objectives. In these areas of the state and in the portions of central Iowa where deer populations are stable to slightly increasing, hunters can help farmers and landowners by killing one or more antlerless

deer during the season. This will help reduce the deer herds towards the population objectives for the area and provides some delicious table fare. Hunters can also utilize the HUSH program to donate deer to the Iowa Food Bank and provide needed meat for Iowans.

A tagging requirement that is new for 2008 requires a hunter who kills an antlered buck to place the transportation tag on the animal's antler. It is recommended that the tag be placed on the antler beam either at the base or between two points. This new law was passed by the Iowa Legislature during its last session.

License holders for the youth deer season who did not harvest a deer are eligible to use the license and unused tag during the early muzzleloader season. However, the youth hunter must follow the weapons restrictions that are in place during the season (a muzzleloading rifle) and be under the direct supervision of an adult mentor.

The early muzzleloader deer season is open from October 11 through October 19. Hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. All deer taken must be reported using the harvest reporting system by midnight the day after the deer is recovered, taken to a locker or taxidermist, processed for human consumption or taken out of state. It is recommended that the harvest report portion of the tag be attached to the carcass of the deer.

This is the third year where hunters have reported their kill and it is an important part of the deer management program in Iowa, playing a vital role in managing deer populations and hunting opportunities. Hunters can report their deer on the DNR website ([www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)), by calling the toll free reporting number (1-800-771-4692), or at a license vender. For hunters with internet access, the online reporting of the harvest is a quick and easy way to register the deer. Last year, early muzzleloader hunters reported harvesting 4,638 deer, of which 53 percent were antlerless.

**For more information, contact Tom Litchfield, wildlife biologist at (641) 774-2958**

## **RELAXED FISHING REGULATIONS AT CRYSTAL LAKE**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will relax the fishing regulations at Crystal Lake from Oct. 23 through Nov. 6, to allow anglers to harvest fish before the lake is renovated in middle November. The lake is being renovated to remove an abundant common carp population and improve water quality.

Crystal Lake dredging was completed in 2007 and the carp removal will be the final step to the lake restoration process.

Anglers with a valid sport fishing license may harvest all sizes and unlimited quantities of any species of fish from Crystal Lake. Any number of poles will be allowed, but anglers must remain in sight of these lines. Trot lines and nets will be

allowed (name and address must be attached if left unattended). Dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices or any stupefying substances will not be allowed.

The water level of Crystal Lake will be drawn down 12 to 24 inches by siphoning and pumping starting in middle October. The lake drawdown will reduce the amount of chemical used for the fish renovation and allow for the area around the boat ramp to be excavated to improve access.

Largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish and northern pike will be restocked starting in the spring of 2009.

**For more information, contact Scott Grummer, fisheries biologist with the Iowa DNR, at 641-357-3517.**